

Message Text

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S E C R E T USNATO 4828

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, XF, NATO
SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST CRISIS: NAC DISCUSSION OCTOBER 10

REF: (A) USNATO 4807 (NOTAL) (B) USNATO 4787

SUMMARY: ON OCTOBER 10 COUNCIL HEARD AN UP-DATED ASSESSMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION FROM GENERAL STEINHOFF, CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE (REF B). STEINHOFF SAID ISRAELI HOPES FOR QUICK VICTORY HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTED AND, BECAUSE OF THE MANY DISADVANTAGES THEY FACE IN A LONGER STRUGGLE, HE NOW REGARDS THE ISRAELI SITUATION AS "SERIOUS." SYG LUNS LISTED IMPORTANT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH, IN HIS VIEW, NATO GOVERNMENTS SHOULD REFLECT UPON. THESE INCLUDED A) PRESSURES ON USG TO REPLACE ISRAELI AIRCRAFT LOSSES WHILE THE FIGHTING IS STILL IN PROGRESS; B) BREZHNEV'S URGING OF ALL ARAB NATIONS TO JOIN IN THE BATTLE; C) SECRETARY KISSINGER'S WARNING TO THE SOVIETS NOT TO TAKE ACTION WHICH MIGHT DESTROY "DETENTE." END SUMMARY.

1. IN CALLING UPON GENERAL STEINHOFF FOR AN UPDATED MILITARY AS-
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SESSMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, LUNS THANKED MEMBER NATIONS FOR PROMPT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ON HIS APPEAL FOR MILITARY INTELLIGENCE INPUT FROM NATIONAL SOURCES TO THE NATO SITUATION CENTER (REF A).

2. AFTER FACTUAL BRIEFING BY AN ASSISTANT, STEINHOFF MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS IN HIS PERSONAL ASSESSMENT:

A) ISRAELI CONFIDENCE IN WINNING THE WAR WITHIN A FEW DAYS HAS BEEN DISAPPOINTED:

B) AFTER FOUR DAYS OF BATTLE NEITHER SIDE HAS GAINED THE UPPER HAND:

C) ISRAEL MAY NOW CONCENTRATE IN THE NORTH AGAINST SYRIA AND TRADE SPACE FOR TIME IN THE SINAI:

D) MATERIAL SUPPORT FROM OTHER ARAB NATIONS IS NOT YET SIGNIFICANT BUT WITH TIME IT WILL BECOME MORE SO:

E) THE CRUX OF ISRAEL'S MILITARY DILEMMA NOW IS HOW MUCH OF ITS REMAINING AIR FORCE IT SHOULD COMMIT AND WHERE;

F) ISRAEL'S OVERALL SITUATION IS "SERIOUS". IT MUST DECIDE NOW ABOUT FIGHTING A LONGER WAR OR WHETHER TO ESCALATE THE AIR WAR AND FACE THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES. IT MUST REALIZE THAT IN A LONGER LASTING CONFLICT ARAB OIL POLICY WILL PUT HEAVY PRSSURE ON ISRAEL'S FRIENDS.

3. SYG LUNS NOTED REPORTS THAT THERE ARE ALREADY HEAVY PRESSURES ON THE USG, INCLUDING FROM A NUMBER OF MORNALLY "DOVISH" US SENATORS, TO REPLACE ISRAELI AIRCRAFT LOSSES IMMEDIATELY, WHILE THE FIGHTING CONTINUES. LUNS ALSO NOTED BREZHNEV IS URGING ALL ARAB NATIONS TO JOIN IN THE BATTLE, AND THAT THIS HAS DRAWN A WARNING FROM SECRETARY KISSINGER WHO CAUTIONED THE SOVIET UNION AGAINST TAKING ACTIONS THAT WOULD DESTROY "DETENTE". FOR THESE AND OTHER REASONS, LUNS SAID THE WHOLE CRISIS IS OF SUBSTANTIAL IMPORTANCE TO NATO GOVERNMENTS AND THEY SHOULD REFLECT CAREFULLY ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE MATTER.

4. LUNS SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THESE NATO CONCERNs, HE INTENDS TO
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INCLUDE DISCUSSION OF THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS IN EVERY COUNCIL MEETING AS LONG AS THE CRISIS IS IN ITS "VIRULENT STAGE."
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